

POINT OF ROCKS TIMBER SALE

April 17, 2006 Land Board

Location of Sale:

- Stillwater Unit (NWLO) – Approximately 10 miles north of Olney, Montana.
- Flathead/Lincoln Counties – Sections 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10 T33N, R24W
 - Sections 30, 31, 32 T34N, R24W
 - Section 36 T34N, R25W

Sale Volume & Estimated Value:

- The estimated sale volume is 26,672 tons (4,104 MBF) with an estimated minimum bid value of \$614,275.00.
- In addition to the estimated stumpage value, a fee of \$3.00/ton for Forest Improvement will be charged for all merchantable sawlog timber harvested.
- 6.50 tons/MBF is the conversion factor.

Sale & Harvest Treatments:

- The sale contains 16 harvest units totaling 705 acres.
- The sale was designed to reduce the risk of catastrophic fire to State trust lands located along Highway 93 and adjacent to other landowners by reducing forest fuel loadings while also improving long-term productivity of timber stands by increasing vigor, reducing incidence of insect infestations and disease infections, and regenerating portions of the stands where forest health and growth are declining. Proposed treatments include; seedtree with reserves, seedtree/shelterwood with reserves, commercial thin. Treatments varied within units based on species composition, aspect, forest health and visual concerns.
- There is no old growth harvest on this sale.

Harvest Systems:

- 100% tractor

Road Construction:

- There is 0.28 mile of new road construction required. A total of 5.5 miles of existing roads will be improved to meet current BMP Standards and safety standards. Existing seasonal and year-round road closures will remain unchanged after project implementation.

Public Involvement:

- Public involvement included local newspaper advertisements; an initial scoping letter that described the proposed project that was sent to interested parties; and the Point of Rocks Timber Sale Project Environmental Analysis and Finding that were mailed to interested parties.

Issues and the Mitigated Effects:

- **Vegetation** - Cover types, out of the 705 acres being treated, 198 acres of the lodgepole pine cover type and 101 acres of the mixed-conifer type would be converted to a western larch/Douglas-fir cover type. These stands would then be consistent with historical cover types.
- **Aesthetics** – DNRC personnel identified six locations with visually sensitive viewpoints in the project area. Mitigation measures include retention of vegetation along Highway 93, limitations on landing location and size, irregular harvest unit boundaries, slashing of damaged residual vegetation and grass seeding.
- **Fisheries and water quality** – The annual water yield in Spring/Rock watershed would increase by an estimated 1% over the current level. Stream shading would not be substantially changed and timber harvesting is not expected to change stream temperatures.
- **Wildlife**
 - Grizzly Bear – Units, road locations and harvest timing restrictions have been designed to reduce impacts to grizzly bears. Hiding cover in the project area would be temporarily reduced, however no Security Core habitat would be entered. The timber sale area contains significant amounts of hiding cover and the effects from harvest are expected to be low.
 - Gray Wolf – The reduction of hiding cover and the effect on wolves is expected to be minimal due to the low levels of wolf use in the area.
 - Fisher – Twelve (12) acres of potential denning and resting habitats would be thinned. The project area contains 629 acres of potential resting and denning habitat. This would be a potential reduction of 1.9% however; fisher may still use the thinned area for resting and denning after operations are complete.
 - Pileated Woodpecker – 33 acres of 142 acres of potential woodpecker nesting habitat would be treated, which may reduce nesting use within the treated area. However, overall impacts are expected to be minimal.
 - Elk – Approximately 90 acres that are part of a larger block of security cover would be harvested. This is not expected to decrease the overall effectiveness of this block for elk security cover.

The Director recommends the Land Board direct the Department to sell the Point of Rocks Timber Sale.